GARFIELD A. WOOD,
Vice Commodore of the Motor Boat Club of America

Miss America in Action

How "Watching Everything" Won Fame and Fortune

ONE time a certain successful man was asked for the secret of his success. His reply: "Quite simple. Even when a boy I made it my business to watch everything that went on about me and to find out all I could about everything I did not know."

Now, if a certain young man had not paused on a side street of St. Paul one day, back in 1912, to watch three laborers unload a truck, America would not stage the international speed boat championship races this year.

You will probably say that it is a long jump from watching three laborers unload a truck in 1912 to holding a world's race event in 1921. It is. If the jump did not exist this story could not be written, for the story will attempt to explain the connection.

It is not so much the story of a speed boat race and the lifting of the championship title from England's shores in 1920 and the attempt to keep it in 1921, as the story of a successful man which shows that opportunities exist in side streets and in tenement districts as well as in world-famed corporations.

The principal character is Garfield A. Wood. He is the man who, in 1912, paused on the street to watch the workmen referred to.

When a boy Garfield A. Wood was an inquisitive sort. He made it his business to find out all he could about everything that interested him. His father was the captain of a lake steamer and Garfield, who was born at Mapleton, Iowa, on December 4, 1880, moved to Duluth with his parents when he was still quite small. Duluth is a leading port of the Great Lakes and the steamer that Captain Wood bossed had Duluth as its home port.

At times his father permitted Garfield to become a passenger. On these occasions the boy spent most of his time watching the work of the hydraulic device that was used to reverse the engines. He was impressed with the ease with which the hydraulic pressure reversed the engines.

When 13 years of age Garfield was hired to supervise the operation of three power boats, purchased by the government for inspection boats in constructing the Duluth Harbor. These boats were of a cranky disposition and young Wood got the job because he could make the engines run although he was hardly strong enough to crank the three-horsepower engines.

Garfield spent as much time around the engines as possible. When not on trips with his father or at work on his power boats, he was investigating other engines, asking questions of the engineers and gathering information.

Interested as he was in engines, Garfield turned to the automobile and decided he would like to sell cars. He became one of the first men in the United States to sell Ford cars. He sold the Model N car in Duluth. The first car he received was No. 13, Model N, in a shipment of five cars.

Later he moved to St. Paul and continued selling Ford cars. Then he handled Ford sixes and had the first Model T's.

Becomes Interested in Power Boats

WHILE selling Ford cars in St. Paul he became interested in power boats for racing purposes. He cruised to Dubuque and attended the 1911 regatta of the Mississippi Valley Power Boat Association on July 4, making the trip to Dubuque in a small power boat.

At Dubuque he met W. P. Cleveland, who had the 14-footer "Leading Lady," carrying a six-cylinder two-cycle engine. The boat had much speed but Cleveland could not keep it running. Wood volunteered to put the engine in shape. Cleveland accepted the offer. Wood put in new bearings, changed the ignition and won the class race, making 30 miles an hour. This time set a new record for the event.

It was the following year when Wood met with the most important event in his life. Walking along the street one day he saw three men laboring to raise a dump truck body with a small hand winch. Wood watched the men for some time and then accosted the driver of the truck. He suggested to him that he could make a mechanical device that would do the work. The driver seemed dubious but Wood continued talking and the driver became partly convinced that Wood might really be able to go through with it. The following day the driver looked Wood up and told him that he would get him an order if Wood was able to produce the device he had outlined to him on the previous day.

At that time Wood was conducting a machine shop in connection with his Ford establishment in St. Paul. This shop was called the G. A. Wood Company. In this shop Wood set about to make good on his promise. He worked for one week and at the end of that time he had produced a crude hoist but one that really did the work. He sold it to the driver.

Wood, not lacking in imagination, saw the possibilities of his invention and visited a patent attorney. He explained to him in detail the invention and its possibilities. The attorney laughed at him. However, the attorney had a young assistant. This assistant had overheard the conversation and became deeply impressed with the proposition that Wood presented. He followed Wood out of the room and told him he would like to go into the matter. This he did with the result that the patent application, as made out by the young assistant, was granted.

Now, fully impressed with the possibilities of his device, Wood thought it a better plan to move near the center of industry, so he gathered his belongings and shipped to Detroit. There he opened a small machine shop.

Wood used a column of oil, forced into a cylinder by a pump operating off the transmission, to lift the body. This idea he received from watching the engines in his father's steamer when he was a boy and also from the fact that the engine was running while the three workmen were trying to dump the load of the truck that day in St. Paul.

Engineer at Age of 13

THE device was improved by Wood and a few minor changes made with the result that it opened a new field of transportation because it permitted excavating operations to be completed more quickly and reduced the number of men and trucks necessary.

During the war the Allies used 3,000 of Wood's hoists on one American-made truck, principally for building and repairing roads in the war zone. With this Wood hydraulic hoist in operation the trucks could discharge their loads rapidly and get out of the way quickly. It takes exactly 13 seconds for the truck to deposit its load.

One day a friend asked Wood how he happened to decide on oil for his hoist and he replied that the oil is self-lubricating and the average driver of a truck would not properly lubricate such a machine.

The first hoist that Wood built was used for an entire year without any replacements being made which in itself was a major accomplishment.

Now to return to the sport end of it and to the connection of the hydraulic hoist with the winning of the world's speed boat championship.

It was in 1912 that Wood invented the hoist and in that year he teamed with Cleveland in the annual motor boat regatta and won all class events for Leading Lady.

The following year Cleveland furnished the engine and Wood constructed his own hull. He named the boat Little Leading Lady and won every event that he could enter at Keokuk, Iowa, where the Mississippi Valley Regatta was held that year.

The hydraulic hoist was now a success. Money was coming in and Wood had the funds with which to pursue his hobby. In 1914 he took his Little Leading Lady to Peoria and again won every event he could enter. The next year he did not race but bought a small cruiser and cruised to Duluth, the home of his boyhood, and back.

In 1916 he made a Georgian Bay cruise and on his return he entered the express cruiser race in Detroit's first Gold Cup Regatta. He won but withdrew the boat when a protest was made that it did not comply with express cruiser rating.

During the autumn of 1916 Wood purchased the Miss Detroit from the Miss Detroit Power Boat Association, an organization of prominent citizens that had clubbed together and subscribed the money used in building the Miss Detroit, a boat that won the national speed boat championship for the Michigan city.

At Algonac, Michigan, Chris Smith, the boat builder, lived. He had had considerable success with building racing craft but Wood thought that he could have even more, so he set about to associate himself with Smith in constructing boats that would smash all previous speed performances on water.

Wood took the Miss Detroit to Smith's boat factory and had him build a new hull, so designed that it would permit a faster journey than the old hull did. He used the same power plant and with this new combination Wood succeeded in bringing back the national championship from Minneapolis in 1917 with the Miss Detroit II.

The following year Wood went after wider honors. He built still another craft during the wintertime, that is, Chris Smith and Chris Smith's sons built it, in company with Wood and with his assistance. This boat was christened Miss Detroit III in the spring of 1918 and it was the first hydroplane ever successfully equipped with an aviation engine, carrying a Curtiss 12.

With Miss Detroit III, Wood won the Thousand Islands trophy and again landed the Gold Cup, emblematic of the American speed boat championship. He also won the Canadian International Gold Challenge Trophy Race at Toronto but was disqualified for accidentally cutting a stake.

Wood still had the Miss Detroit II and with this earlier built boat he captured the Webb Trophy in the Mississippi Valley Regatta at Moline, Illinois.

In 1919 Wood again brought out the Miss Detroit III to defend her honors and the boat again came through for him, once more winning the Gold Cup.

Having conquered everything in sight in his own country Wood turned to other shores. England held the Harmsworth trophy, emblematic of the world's speed boat championship. England had held it for several years, and England expected to continue holding it. Wood pointed his efforts toward lifting it.

After the race season of 1919 closed Wood began laying definite plans for an invasion of Great Britain. His manufacturing achievements were paying him good dividends. He had become a wealthy man and with the riches he intended to go to the very limit with his hobby; he decided to bring back the world's race boat championship to the United States.

Wood talked to Smith, the boat builder. Together they planned the Miss America and the Miss Detroit V, both twin-engined hydroplanes. He presented the Miss Detroit V to his son, Garfield A. Wood, Jr.

Last summer Wood went to England, taking both boats with him. It was a costly undertaking. The expense did not matter with Wood; he wanted the title brought back to America.

66 Miles an Hour Fast Enough

THE international championship races were staged at Cowes, Isle of Wight, on August 10 and 11. Miss America, averaging 66 miles an hour, won the event and Miss Detroit V finished second.

It was not much of a race. Wood had planned for several years, had gone so deep into the subject, considered every angle so carefully that it was almost impossible to slip up. He knew the possibilities of his own craft and, before he was in England two weeks, he knew exactly the possibilities of the craft that would oppose him for the trophy. He went no faster than he had to to win; he had reduced the matter to an exact science.

Wood brought the Harmsworth trophy back with him. He returned to Detroit and in September, less than a month after he took the international championship, he once more won the Gold Cup. Having accomplished that he went after the one-mile championship and in this dash he "stepped on her." Miss America, under Wood's guidance, covered one mile at the rate of 78.23 miles an hour, the fastest any craft has ever traveled. This record also gives an idea that Wood, winning the Harmsworth trophy in a pace of 66 miles an hour, was not going nearly so fast as he could have traveled in the race at Cowes.

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